

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are currently pending, of which claims 1, 13, and 21 are independent.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted Prior Art (APA) disclosed in the background section of the application, in view of EP 0856761 (EP '761). Specifically, the Examiner acknowledged that the APA tight-buffered optical fiber discussed in the background section, and shown in Figure 2 of the drawings, lacks a plurality of strength members embedded in the first buffer layer 106, and only shows strength members surrounding the first buffer layer. The Examiner, however, asserted that EP '761 discloses optical fiber 1 provided with a buffer layer 4, which is embedded with strength members 3 (see EP '761, Figure 2), and argued that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the APA to include strength members embedded in the first buffer layer. The Examiner also concluded that this feature would also have been a matter of obvious design and location of parts for providing a more compact fiber and better retention of the strength members to the fiber, since the strength members are embedded in the buffer layer. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 21, Applicant respectfully submits that EP '761 neither discloses nor suggests a first buffer layer of a polymeric material enclosing an optical fiber and a plurality of strength members embedded in the first buffer layer and longitudinally positioned with respect to the optical fiber. For example, in contrast to the Examiner's assertions, layer 4 of EP '761 does not disclose or suggest the claimed buffer layer. Fig. 2 of EP '761 discloses "[a] resin covering layer 4 which is formed integrally with the UV curable resin coated optical fiber to surround respective

metal monofilaments 3." (EP '761, Col. 6, lines 35-37). Layer 4 of EP '761 corresponds to the Polymer coating layer 104 of the prior art, as shown in Fig. 1 of the present specification. Layer 4, like layer 104, is a protective coating layer on the optical fiber, not a buffer layer outside of the protective coating of the optical fiber (see, e.g. buffer layer 306 in Fig. 3 of the present application). Please refer to page 1 and 8 of the application for a description of Polymer coating layers 104 and 304, which are synonymous with layer 4 in EP '761.

In contrast to the invention of claims 1 and 21, which are directed to strengthening members embedded in a buffer layer surrounding an optical fiber, the EP '761 is concerned with altering coating layers that are part of the optical fiber itself. Accordingly, the combination of EP '761 and the APA would produce a tight buffered fiber with strengthening members in the protective coating on the optical fiber and strengthening members surrounding the buffer layer outside of the protective coating. This combination would not produce a tight buffered optical fiber comprising: an optical fiber, at least a first buffer layer of a polymer material enclosing said optical fiber, and a plurality of strength members embedded in said first buffer layer and longitudinally positioned with respect to said optical fiber, as recited in claims 1 and 21.

Consequently, independent claims 1 and 21 are patentable over the cited references.

With respect dependent claims 2-12 and 22, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable, at least for the same reasons as claims 1 and 21 and by virtue of their dependency on claims 1 and 21.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) rejection of claims 1-12 and 21-22.

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The Examiner rejected claim 13 by asserting that the various claimed curing processes for curing the buffer layers are deemed old and well established in the art of fiber optic making. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 13 is allowable, at least, because it recites a process for making the tight-buffered optical fiber of claim 1. The process of claim 13 constructs a tight-buffered optical fiber with "a plurality of strength members embedded in the first buffer layer and longitudinally positioned with respect to said optical fiber." It follows from the discussion of claims 1 and 21, that it would not have been obvious from the process used to produce the optical fiber cord of the APA or EP '761 to produce the tight-buffered optical fiber of claim 1.

With respect dependent claims 14-20, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable, at least for the same reasons as claim 13 and by virtue of their dependency on claim 13.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) rejection of claims 13-20.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

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Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: December 19, 2003

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